DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 736 RC 011 705

AUTHOR Hoffman, Jeanne, Comp.: And Others
TITLE Position Paper and Recommendations: The Family and Child Development.
INSTITUTION Council on Appalachian Women, Mars Hill, N.C.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Advocacy: Child Development Centers: Childhood Needs: Child Rearing: *Children: Child Welfare: Community Involvement: Cultural Background: Cultural Influences: Delivery Systems: *Family Life: Family Life Education: *Federal Legislation: *Human Services: *Needs: *Rural Family: Social Values
IDENTIFIERS Appalachia: Appalachian Regional Commission DC: *Council on Appalachian Women

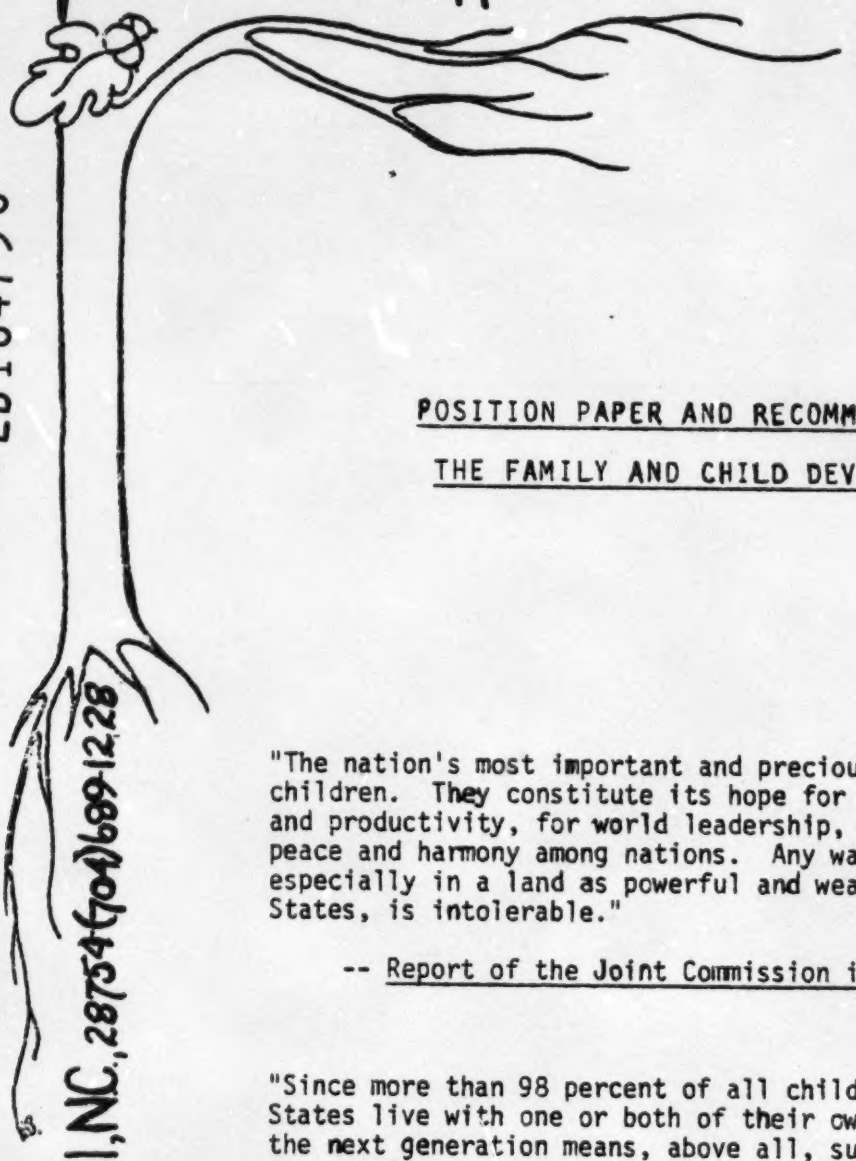
ABSTRACT

The Council on Appalachian Women calls upon the governors of the Appalachian region to provide the leadership necessary for change that will benefit children and adults alike, that will provide access to the needed human services, and that will at the same time preserve the rural nature and the desirable qualities of Appalachian culture. The Council pledges support to and urges adoption of programs that stress the needs of families and young children, including: (1) national legislation addressing comprehensive family and health services, (2) continuation of the Child Development Program of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) at the present level of quality, (3) ongoing financial support for ARC demonstration programs that prove worthy of continuation, (4) single entry human service delivery systems planned and implemented at the local level, (5) human service programs aimed at prevention and early intervention rather than remediation, (6) creative and imaginative programs to teach parenting and family living skills, (7) national comprehensive child health insurance with coverage for children from birth to age 5. The Council believes that before any policy becomes public policy a "Family Impact Study" should be conducted to determine how legislation would affect children and their families. (JH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED184736

The Council on Appalachian Women



The trees that surround her symbolize the character of the Appalachian Woman.

DEC 1979
ERIC/CRESS
RECEIVED

POSITION PAPER AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FAMILY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

"The nation's most important and precious resource is its children. They constitute its hope for continued achievement and productivity, for world leadership, and for eventual peace and harmony among nations. Any waste of this resource, especially in a land as powerful and wealthy as the United States, is intolerable."

-- Report of the Joint Commission in Mental Health - 1973

"Since more than 98 percent of all children in the United States live with one or both of their own parents, supporting the next generation means, above all, supporting today's parents."

-- The Carnegie Council on Children - 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jeanne T. Hoffman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RC 011705
P.O. Box 490, Mars Hill, NC, 28754 (704) 689-1228

THE FAMILY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

I. THOUGHTS . . . . . Page 1

II. TRUTHS . . . . . Page 4

III. RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . Page 6

This report compiled by the Council on Appalachian Women Child Development Committee:

Jeanne Hoffman - North Carolina
Teresa Zimmerman - North Carolina
Nancy Travis - Georgia
Josephine Foster - North Carolina
Tilda Kemplen - Tennessee
Betty Siegel - North Carolina
Janet Murray - North Carolina
Dabbie Stebbins - North Carolina
Jeannie Day - North Carolina
Elizabeth Provence - North Carolina
Shirley Parker - Alabama
Emily Leedy - Ohio
Fearcella Peston - North Carolina
Kathy Johnson - North Carolina
Sherry Metzger - North Carolina

I. THOUGHTS

Change, like dandelions in the springtime, is spreading across the land in Appalachia as more and more families are able to secure paying jobs within the region and glimpse economic prosperity for the first time. Yet with the rise of prosperity many traditions are being challenged, values are being eroded and the family unit, the mainstay of the Appalachian culture is being attacked from all sides.

The role of women in the culture is perhaps experiencing the greatest change. No longer is the Appalachian woman's fate to be "kept home, barefoot and pregnant." Improved economic conditions have allowed us to purchase "fearsound" shoes and modern contraceptives have given us a choice about pregnancy. Moreover, Appalachian women are on the move. Many of us have moved from the field to the factory and from the kitchen to the classroom. Economic necessity and increased opportunities have led many of us to leave the cabin and venture out to the cities or into the coalmines ourselves. Yet whether we remain in our humble houses in the hollers raising children and crops, or whether we are becoming doctors and lawyers, the importance of family and children is always with us.

Obviously, such efforts by the Appalachian Regional Commission as improved health and educational services have paid off in terms of more healthy and alert children. There are those in government who would view "the Appalachian experiment"

much the same as God did the creation of the seventh day by saying "All is well - I shall rest." However, all is not well in Appalachia now, or as long as there is one child whose retardation is the result of poor prenatal care or as long as there is one child whose development has been delayed due to harsh economic and social conditions. Rather than resting, we must recommit ourselves to the continuation of beneficial programs such as the ARC Child Development Program. Additionally, we must dedicate ourselves to the creation and implementation of programs which are directed toward the devastating of powerlessness and to the multitude of choices which cripple many of our families in today's society.

We must ask ourselves what have we accomplished if we have given a large group of our children the best we have to offer in terms of child development and services for five years and then closed the door to services to them and other children. The problems in our culture such as poor nutrition, health care and high rates of mental retardation and physical deformity are the results of centuries of isolation and inadequate resources. Such problems can only be overcome with a more proportionate commitment of time and resources than just the past five years.

Although we have made strides in dealing with the scars of poverty, another enemy is beginning to strike at our culture under the guise of modern times. For decades many of our families faced hardships and poverty that would have totally

wiped out other cultures. However, we survived, partly because of our capabilities for self-sufficiency, but also because we had no other choice or resources.

Still, we cannot look at our problems in isolation. We must deal with economic, health, education and social issues collectively. When bringing in an industry to improve economic conditions in an area, we must be prepared to provide the supportive services to farm families whose traditional roles are disrupted when either parent leaves the home to work. If our mission is to retain the positive values of the Appalachian culture, we must identify the cornerstones of the culture such as the small family farm and make it economically feasible for families who choose to remain on the farm. Other problems which include increasing rates of teenage pregnancy, wife-beating and alcoholism should be viewed in terms of the influence of the dominant culture on the Appalachian culture. Yet the solutions to these problems should arise from the strengths of our own culture from such sources as the value placed on personal relationships and family.

All of us want a better life for ourselves and our children. We want to be able to say more than the old mountaineer when he stated that the only thing the good Lord gave him was rocks and rattlesnakes.

We not only want to say that we were given more than rocks and rattlesnakes, but that we did the best we could with what we had for ourselves and our children. Doing the best that we

can, can only result from a partnership between governmental resources and native knowledge. We simply ask that we be "planned with" instead of being "planned for."

The following truths and proposals are based on our native knowledge and experience. We offer them as a framework for policy that will affect our daily lives and the lives of our children. We know about the specialness of Appalachia: its beauty, its natural resources and its unique culture. We wish to reserve this specialness for our children. Most importantly, we wish to develop our children's potential so they can fully appreciate our Appalachia.

II. TRUTHS

WE, THE COUNCIL ON APPALACHIAN WOMEN, INC., believing that the time for theorizing is past, and the time for action has long since arrived, "HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT":

1. The family is the most vital unit of society and the Appalachian family as in other rural areas, is the foundation of the social, political and economic systems.

2. THAT the family of Appalachia is as diverse and complex as is the region itself. Its problems are largely the problems of any rural family, accentuated by isolation and generations of attempted self-sufficiency with inadequate resources.

3. THAT parents are the primary learning models of their children, for good or bad.

4. THAT good parenting is a skill to be learned -- and once learned, it is transmitted from one generation to another. By the same token, poor parenting is also passed on from one generation to another.

5. Children are our greatest natural resource. The first five years of life are the most vital for assuring a person the freedom and the capacity to develop to his or her best potential.

6. A "New Generation in Appalachia can only come about through careful attention to the needs, strengths and potential of the family -- both adults AND children.

7. Ignorance concerning the awesome importance of a child's first three years of life, poor nutrition, poor health care and absence of dental services are areas of need vital to the well-being of persons in Appalachia.

8. Any productive programming that intends to address and resolve the needs of Appalachia MUST involve Appalachians, themselves, from conception to conclusion. It cannot be too strongly stated that consumers and deliverers of services and professionals in Appalachia MUST be a vital part of this process.

9. Appalachian families need to be helped to see that services are available to enhance their own resources for meeting family needs. Such services are not "public welfare"; rather Appalachians are entitled as citizens to these services.

The ARC Child Development Program is one program that works with ALL members of the family seeking comprehensive solutions to

problems. The ARC Child Development Program utilizes available public and private agencies to offer health, nutritional, dental, developmental as well as educational services to children, providing a variety of modules of service: family day care, home visitors, center-based care, providing thousands of jobs for Appalachians, serving ALL children -- regardless of family income. The program has found itself involved in adult education, development of cottage industries, transportation, child abuse and/or neglect, financial counseling, family advocacy, utilizing consumers as well as deliverers of all the multiplicity of services existent in the human services community.

North Carolina's Governor Jim Hunt has said that unless the Appalachian Regional Commission plans for human services and development concommitant with its plans for economic services and development, it plans in vain.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Agreeing completely with the Governor's statement and anticipating creative and competent efforts toward raising a new generation in our region, the Council on Appalachian Women submits the following recommendations:

1. THAT the ARC Governors and their staffs provide strong support and leadership for a national bill which addresses comprehensive family and child services.

2. THAT these same Governors and their staffs exhaust every

possible resource to continue the Child Development Program at its present level of quality as a strategic link in the human services system for Appalachian families.

3. THAT by the third year of any five year demonstration grant, ARC at the federal level give staff time and any other resources at their command to seek ongoing financial support for those demonstration programs that prove worth continuing.

4. THAT a single entry delivery system at the local level be a high priority and that all human service delivery systems, including the public school systems, be mandated to work toward that end.

5. THAT the local community be given the freedom to determine the shape of the single entry system, and that monetary incentives be used to reward communities that demonstrate that their human service agencies, both public and private, are coordinating and cooperating in addressing human needs. (It should be implicit that services are not being duplicated with public tax monies.)

6. THAT all human service programs in Appalachia be comprehensive and provide flexibility and space to allow for local and individual strengths and differences.

7. THAT human service programs be aimed at prevention and early intervention rather than remedial, corrective and punitive action.

8. THAT a national comprehensive child health insurance program be established, with complete coverage for children ages 0-5.

9. THAT there be established at the state and federal levels

commissions on the family, or family advocacy councils, to serve as a watchdog over human service programs, their delivery and their comprehensive support of families.

10. THAT before any policy becomes public policy, it should be required to answer the questions, "How does this affect families?" "How will this affect children?" and that a "Family Impact Study" should be a requisite for any public legislation passed.

The Federal Catalogue of Domestic Assistance Programs lists 250 programs providing direct financial assistance or service, administered by 17 federal departments and agencies, which have potential impact on American families.

11. THAT creative and imaginative programs be developed which work with parents prior to the birth of and during the first three years of their children's lives, that family life education and parenting skills be taught in the middle and high schools of the land, and that an intensive and massive public education program on the needs of the families and young children be a constant.

The Council on Appalachian Women is primarily a rural organization. The Appalachian region is largely rural. We value greatly that ruralness and many of the values which this implies. We particularly value people and the sense of community which is vital to any healthy, adjusted society.

We know that recent studies conducted by the Rand Corporation

indicate that a "rural renaissance" is taking place in this country and migration to the remoter rural counties is vastly increasing. The study particularly cites Appalachia.

We believe in the value of the family and in the heritage of our nation and our region. However, realizing that nothing stays the same and all is constantly changing, we call upon the governors of the Appalachian region to provide the leadership necessary to allow for the type of change from which all individuals benefit: the children, and the adults.

We believe that with leadership and commitment we can have access to needed human services, delivered at a quality level and at the same time, (1) maintain our rural nature, and (2) preserve the desirable qualities of our Appalachian culture.

The Council on Appalachian Women will do everything possible to cooperate and facilitate the achievement of these goals.